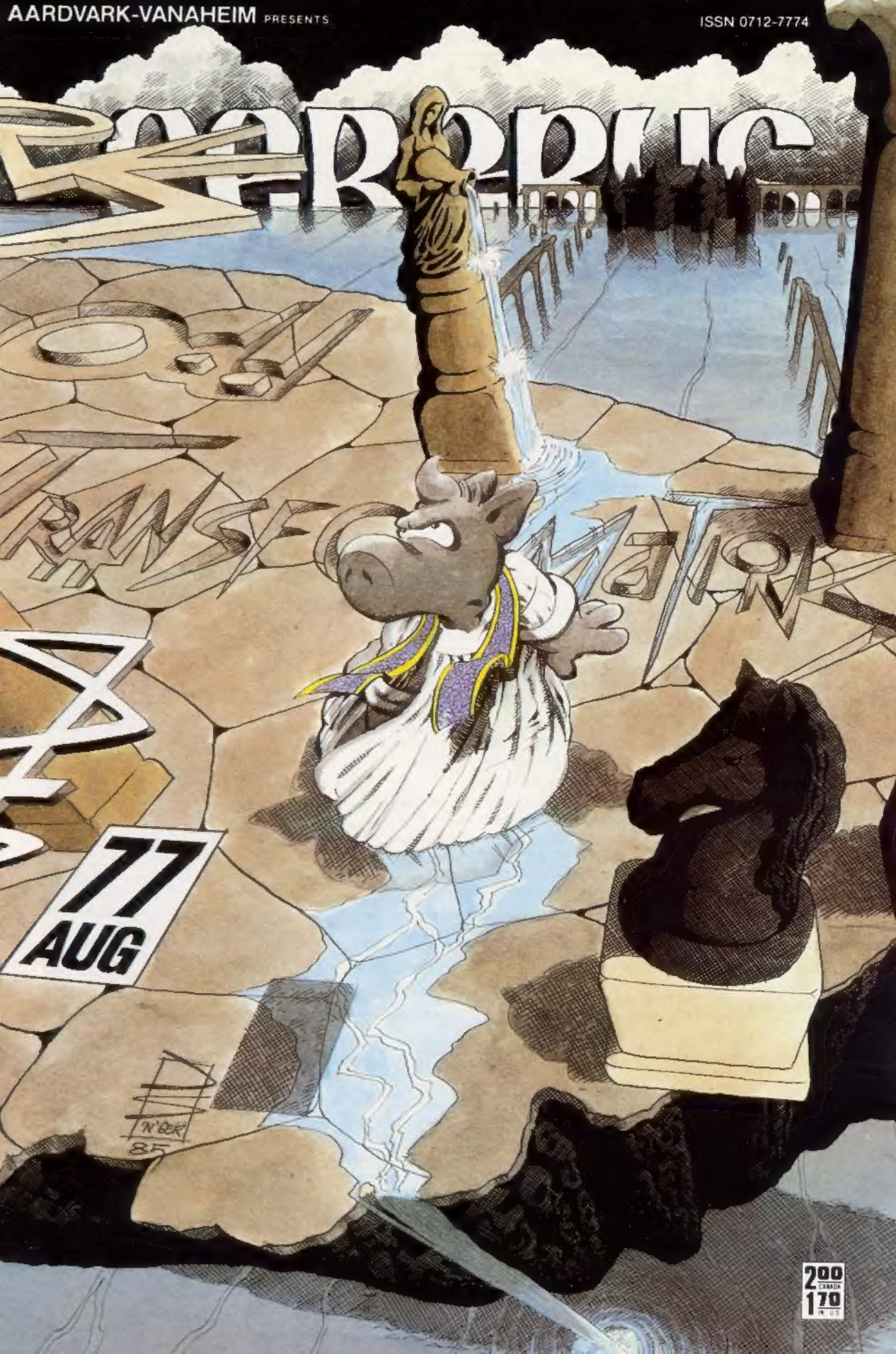
AARDVARK-VANAHEIM PRESENTS

ISSN 0712-7774

CEREBUS

TRANSFORMATION

77 AUG



2.00 CANADA 1.70 IN US

N O T E • F R O M • T H E P R E S I D E N T

Karen and I are so far behind on producing the next edition of the newsletter, that we have decided to do three newsletters in one and give you (a) my diary of the 1982 US Tour (b) photos from the tour (c) sketches I did on the tour (d) ads various shops used to promote the individual stops on the tour. It will be all typeset, with a colour cover. If you join the fan club, it's part of your membership fee for the year. If you don't want to join the fan club, we'll sell you a copy for the same price as a yearly membership... $10.00.

So much for the laissez-faire capitalism portion of our program.

****

I just realized that I mentioned Flaming Carrot cross-over in Cerebus Jam in this issue's letters page. For Bob and I to work together on a story is a clear violation of the Share Purchase Agreement under which I acquired complete control of Aardvark-Vanaheim. The only exception outlined in the agreement is the normalman pages I drew for the short Italian guy who quit smoking (theoretically). This would permit Renegade Press to sue A-V's ass off (legally). I would hope that my taking this opportunity to urge all Cerebus fans to buy multiple copies of all Renegade Press books (explicitely) would forestall any legal action on the part of said party of the second part (ex-maritally). Bob Burden is like a siamese twin I haven't seen since birth (metaphysically).

So no "Sue me Sue you" right, Deni (professionally)?

And how about letting us print **your** diary of the 1982 tour (hypothetically)?

****

Before leaving jurisprudence totally by the wayside, I'd like to thank Marvel Comics and Peter David for treating me and a table-full of fans in Dallas to dinner. Just to be provocative, we began talking about Marvel's Legal Dept's cease-and-desist order on my parody of Wolverine in issues 54-56. Basically I asked him "What would Marvel do if I were to take out a full page ad in the Buyers' Guide saying, in effect, 'Dear Marvel, The extensive usage of the character Sy'm in the X-Men and New Mutants, including as it does the distinctive likeness and personality of my character, Cerebus the Aardvark, being on the part of the writer of these series a conscious and self-admitted parody of my character, constitutes a violation of my and Aardvark-Vanaheim's joint ownership of the trademark and copyright of said character, and, in view of the legal principle of 'easement' by which if I and A-V, Inc., fail to prosecute Marvel Comics, it's agents and licensees for said violation of trademark and copyright that I am then in danger of losing ownership of my character to the public domain. Consequently, it is with full awareness of the aforementioned legal pitfalls that I and A-V, Inc., have decided it's time someone wasn't such a total asshole about copyright and took the fucking risk.

Go nuts, Chris. Put Sy'm wherever you want to. I love it!

I won't tell you what Peter's reply was, because Peter in no way speaks for Marvel Comics on legal matters. They have lawyers for that. Just like I do.

I did venture the opinion that it would make an interesting panel at a con; a debate between me and Marvel's legal department on the Wolverroach vs. Sy'm copyright issue.

****

And if you ever run into Peter David, ask him to tell you the story of the time he did X-Men sketches at a convention in Florida (Peter isn't an artist; he works in Promotion at Marvel). I've heard him tell it four times and it gets better every time. Great story.

****

Continued on the Letter Page

PERSONAL APPEARANCES

AUGUST 31ST RESCHEDULED TO SEPT. 7, 1985
Somerset Travelodge
Easton Avenue, next to Exit 6
New Brunswick, N.J.

SEPTEMBER 1ST RESCHEDULED TO SEPT. 8, 1985
NEW YORK COMIC CON
Skyline Motor Inn
725 10th Ave. at 50th St., New York, N.Y.
(201) 335-1849

SEPTEMBER 19TH
RAINBOW'S END
78-A Cowley Road, Oxford, England

SEPTEMBER 20, 21, 22
U.K. COMIC ART CON '85
University of London Union,
Central London, England

OCTOBER 19, 20 (Dave & Gerhard)
FALL CON
University Centre Hotel
1535 S.W. Archer Road, Gainesville, FL.
(904) 374-8593

CEREBUS

NO. 77 AUG. 1985

DAVE SIM
President

KAREN McKIEL
Administrator

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Madison, WI 53713

Diamond Comics Distributors Inc.
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Portland, Oregon 97232

Titan Distributors
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Styx Comic Service
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R2W 3R6

Now & Then Books
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N2G 1V9

Andromeda Publications
367 Queen St. W.
Toronto, Ontario Canada
M5V 2A4

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114A Building,
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Kansas City, KS., 66115

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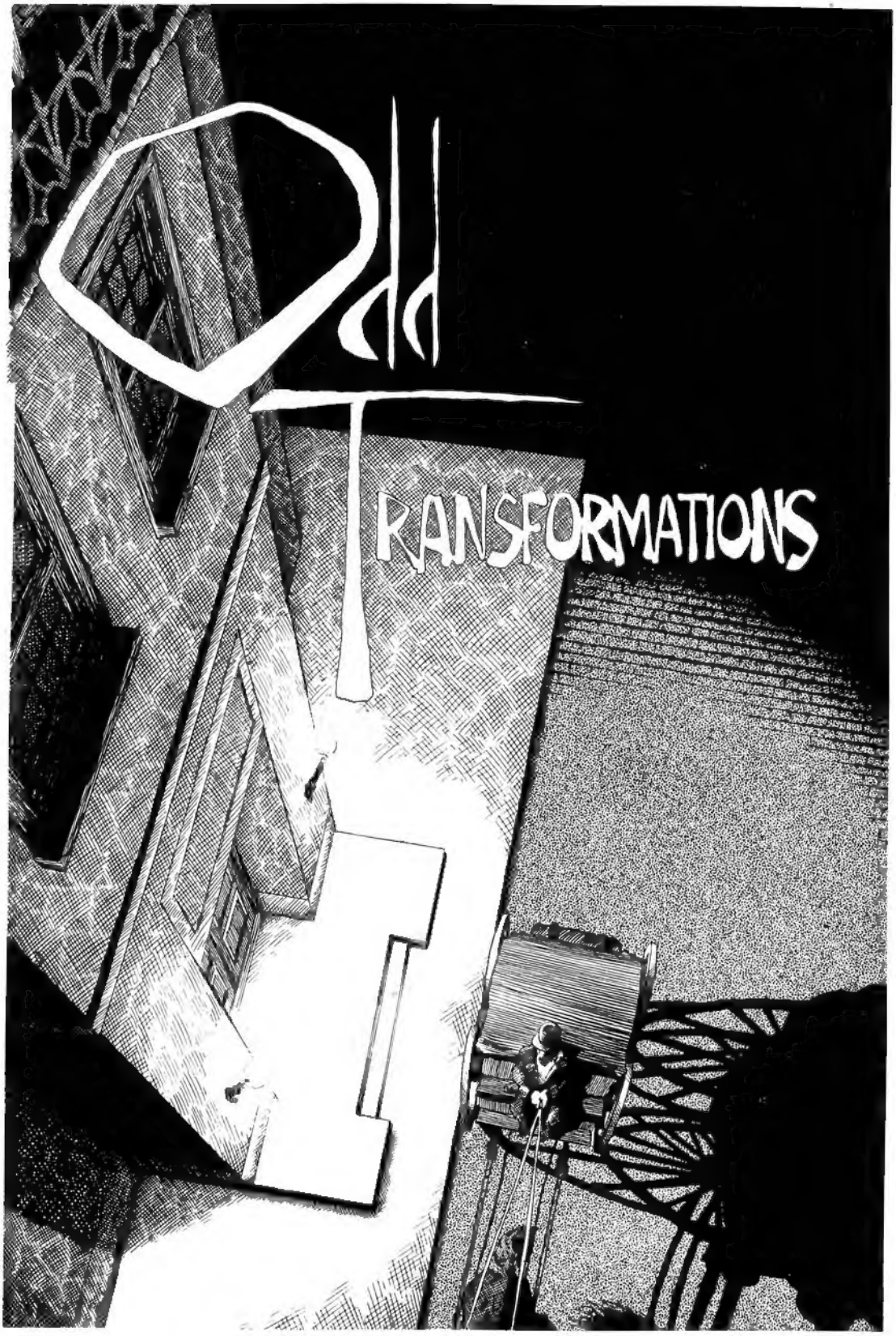
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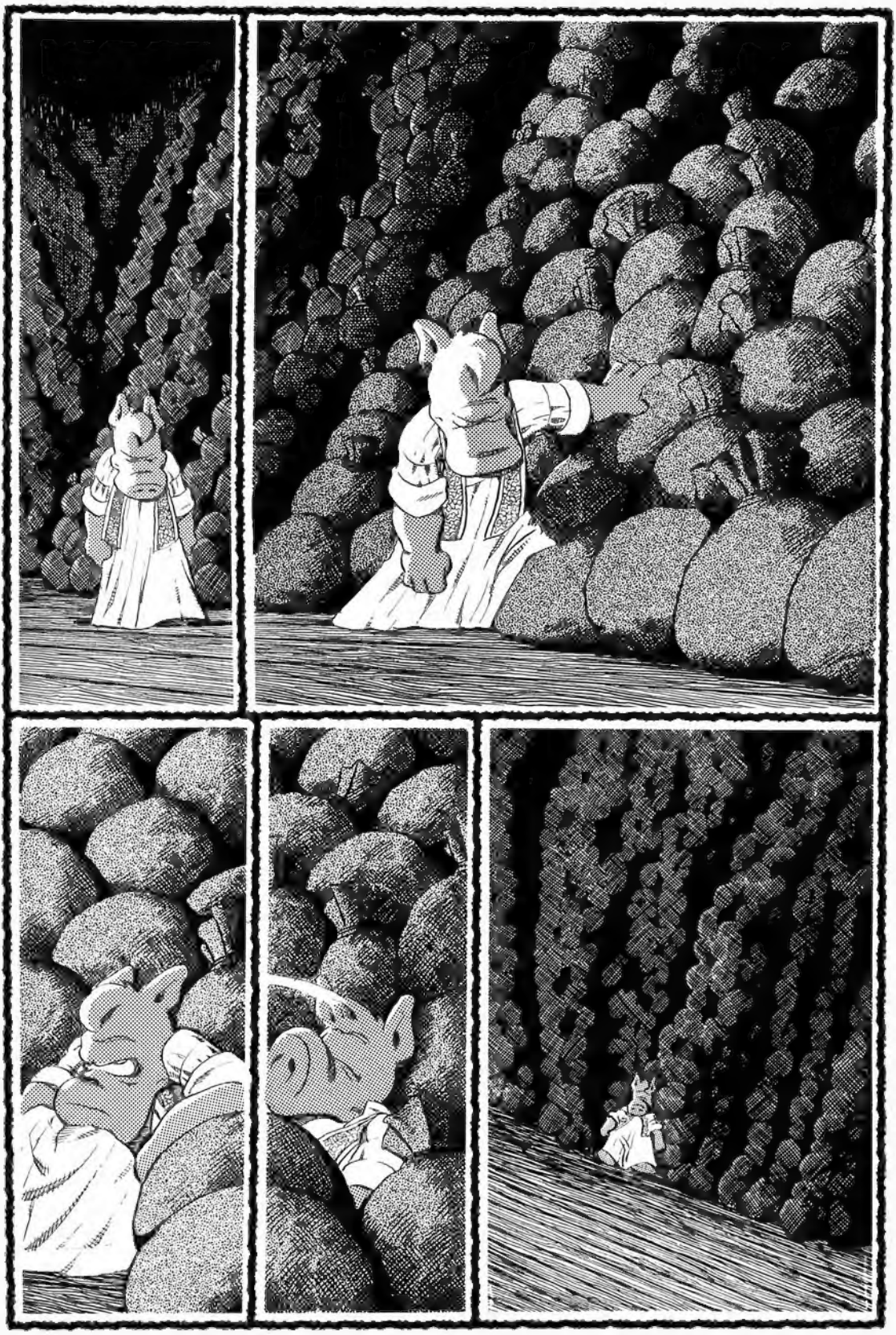
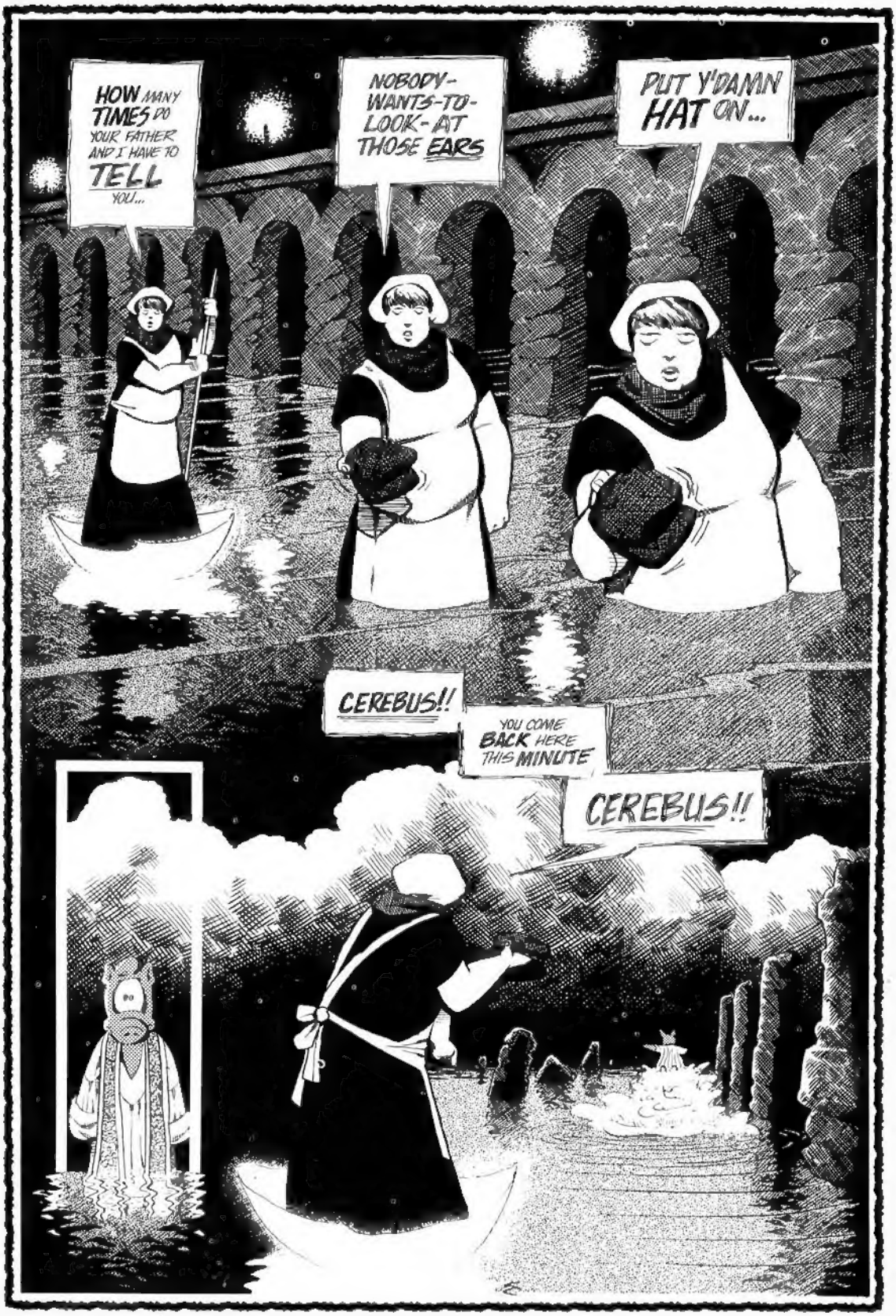
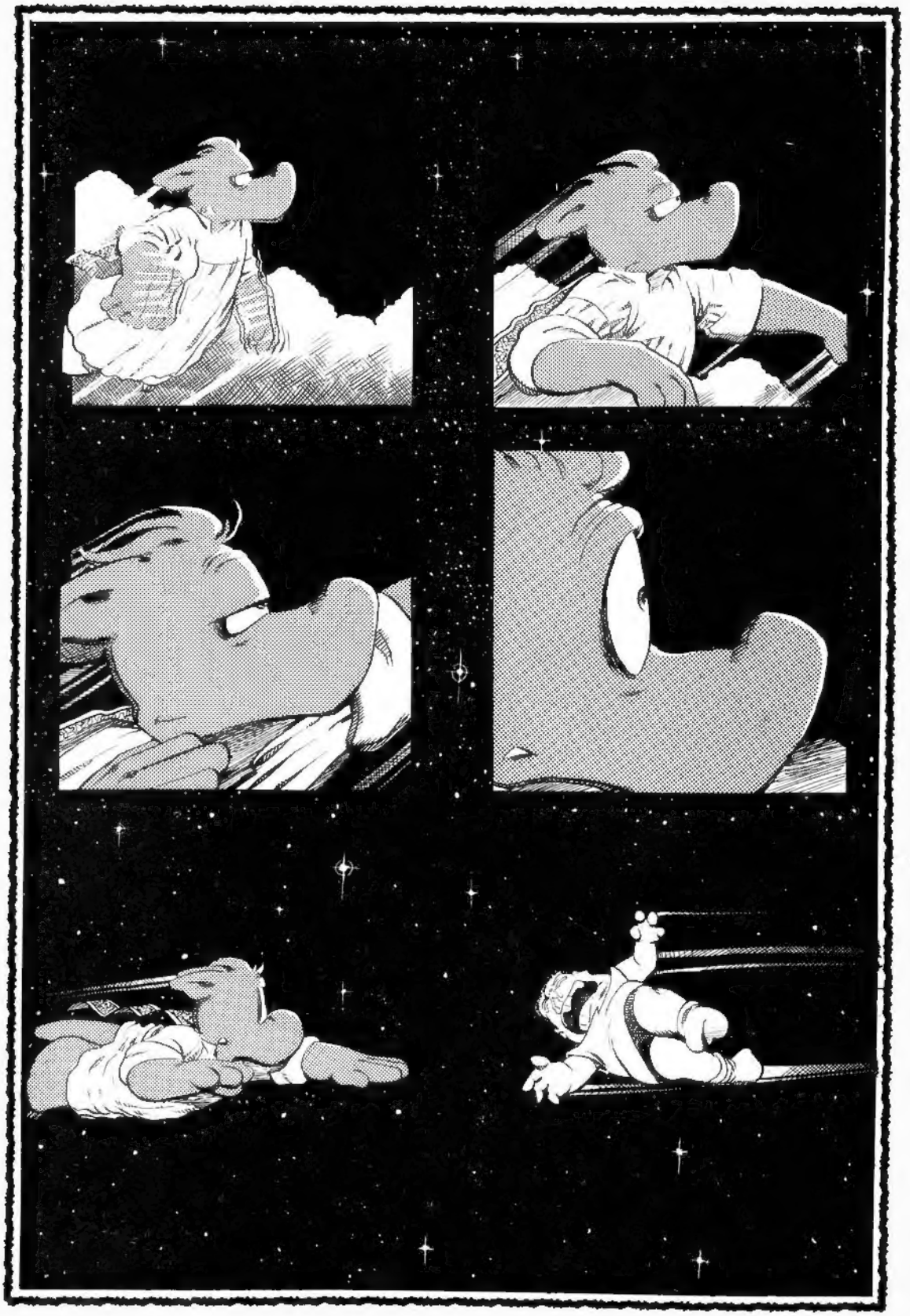
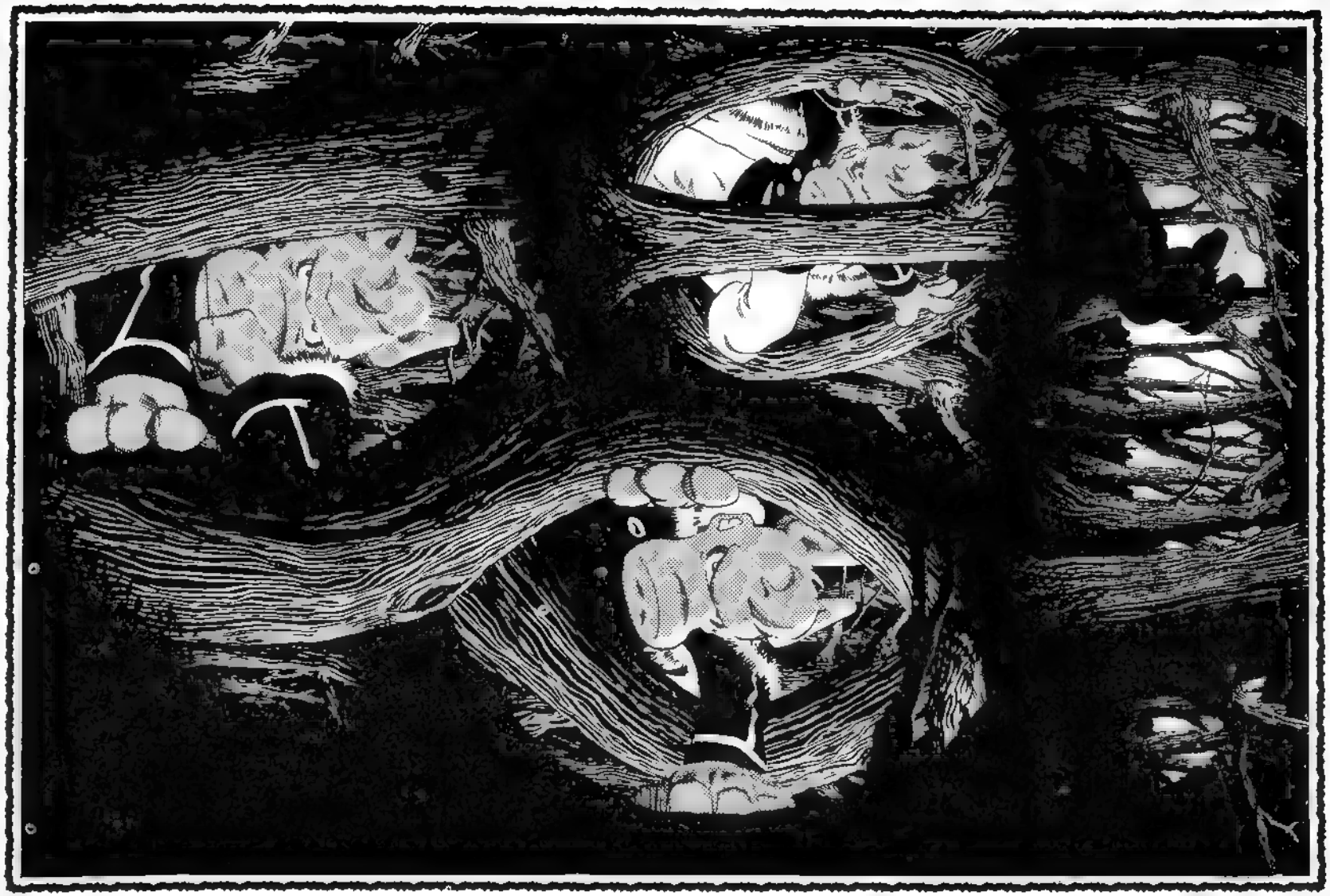


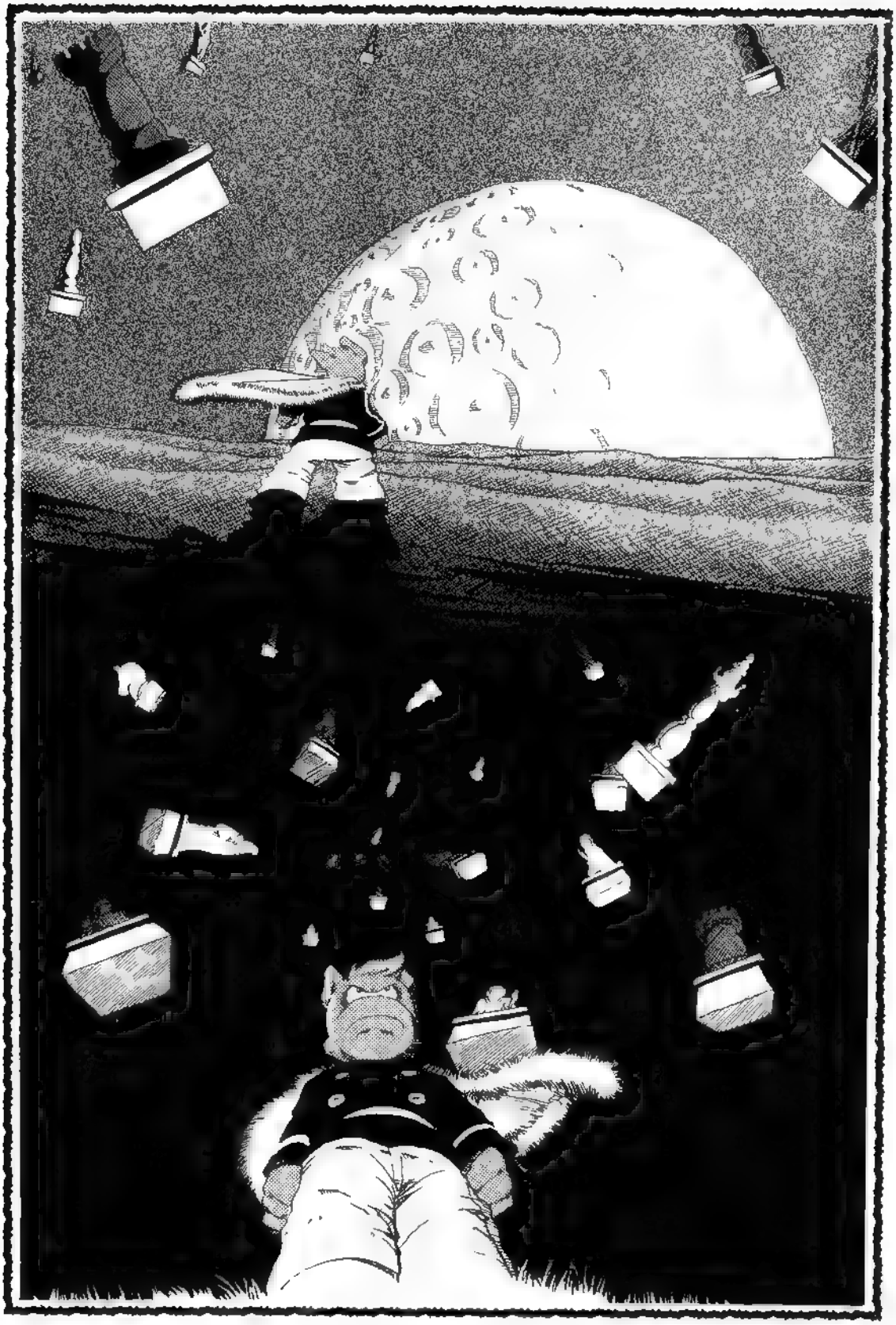
CEREBUS!

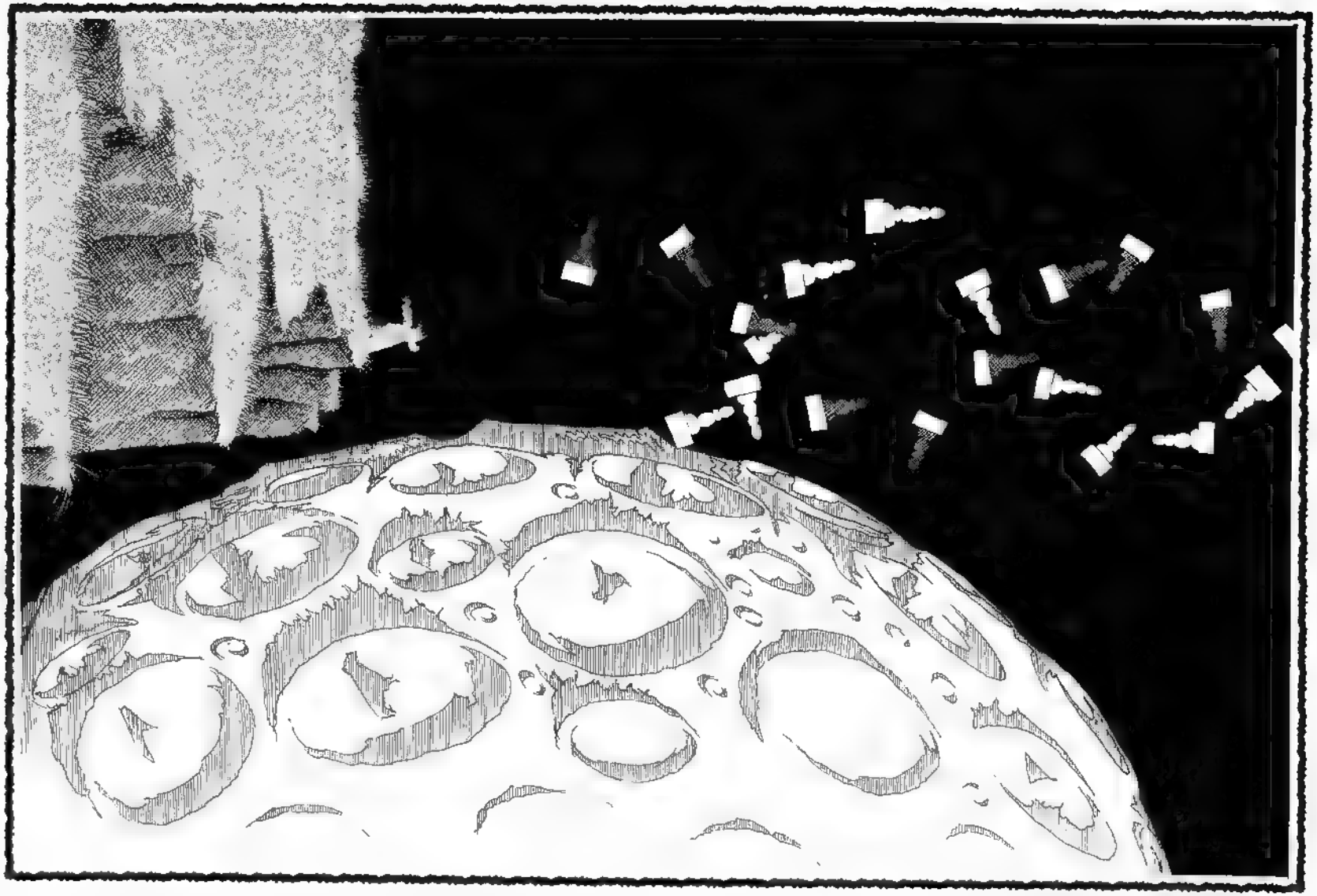

HOW MANY TIMES DO YOUR FATHER AND I HAVE TO TELL YOU...
NOBODY-WANTS-TO-LOOK-AT THOSE EARS
PUT Y'DAMN HAT ON...
CEREBUS!!
YOU COME BACK HERE THIS MINUTE
CEREBUS!!



YOO HOO!
IT'S MEEE!
YOO HOO



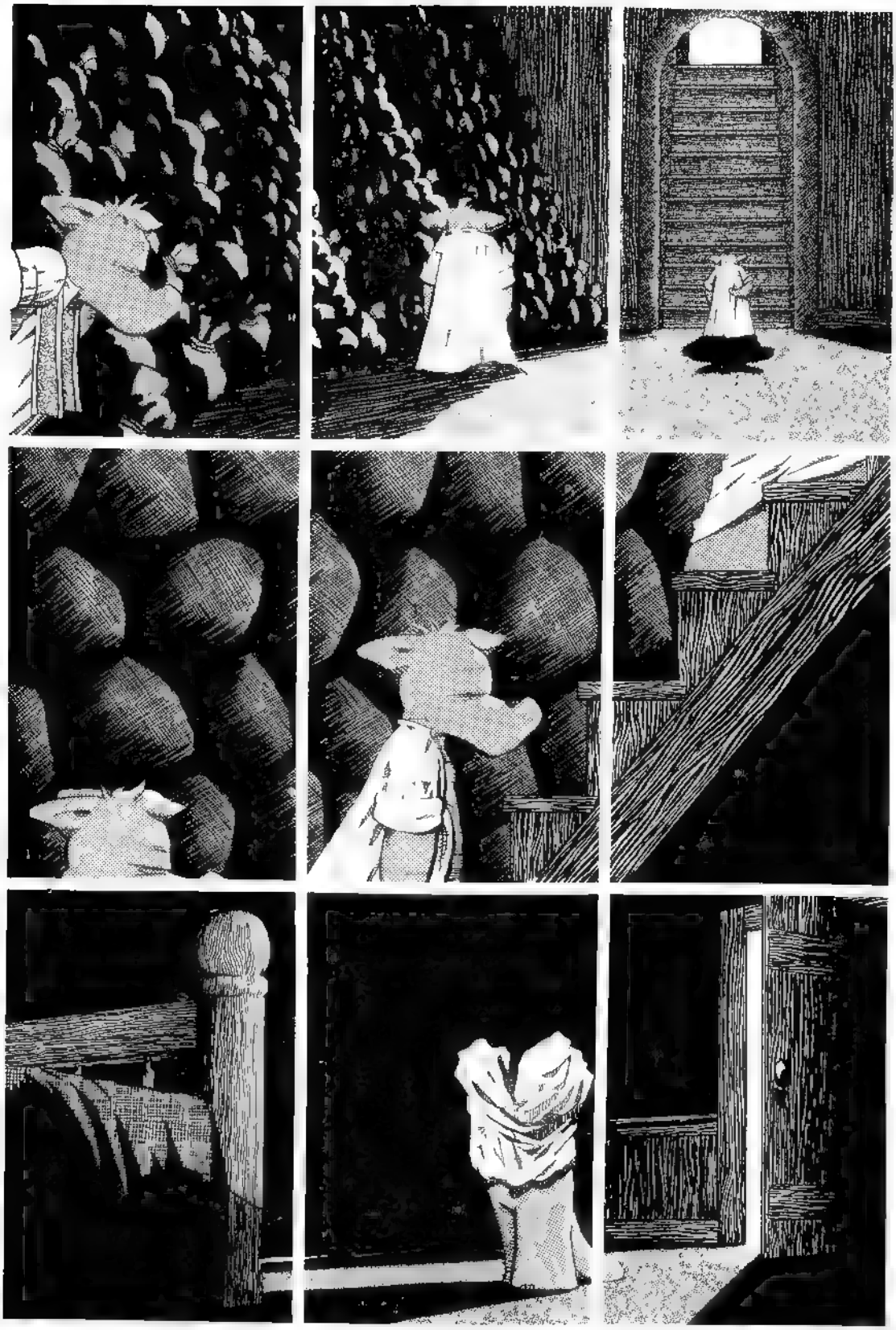


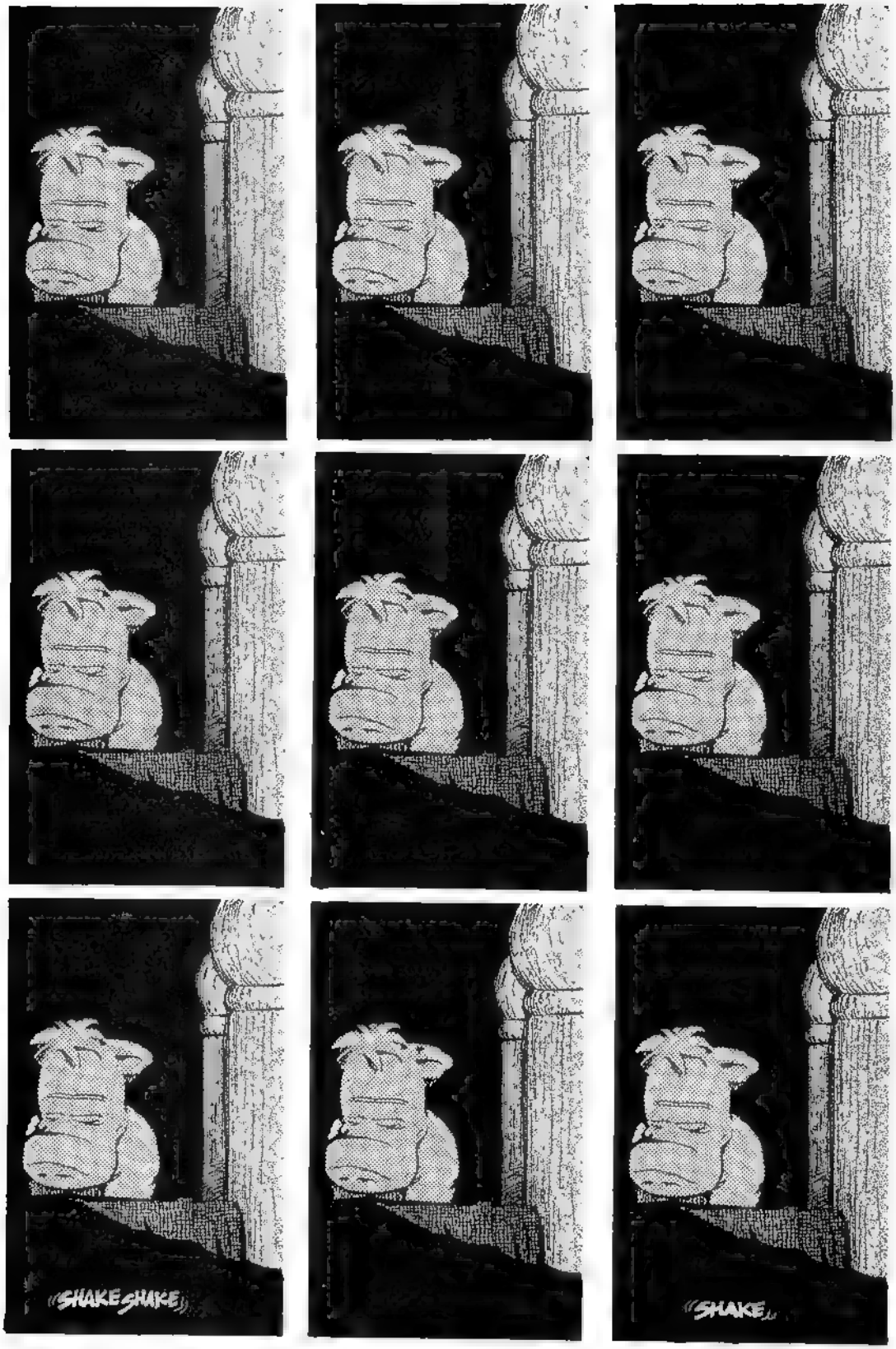


DON'T JUST STAND THERE COME ON IN...
THERE YOU ARE..

I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOU
WELL COME ON...
YOU'RE NOT DOING ME ANY GOOD STANDING OVER THERE ...
JAKA IS SORRY SHE LIED ABOUT BEING MARRIED
CAN YOU FORGIVE JAKA?

AYE
THANK YOU..
I... NEVER LEAVE YOU AGAIN..
NEVER...

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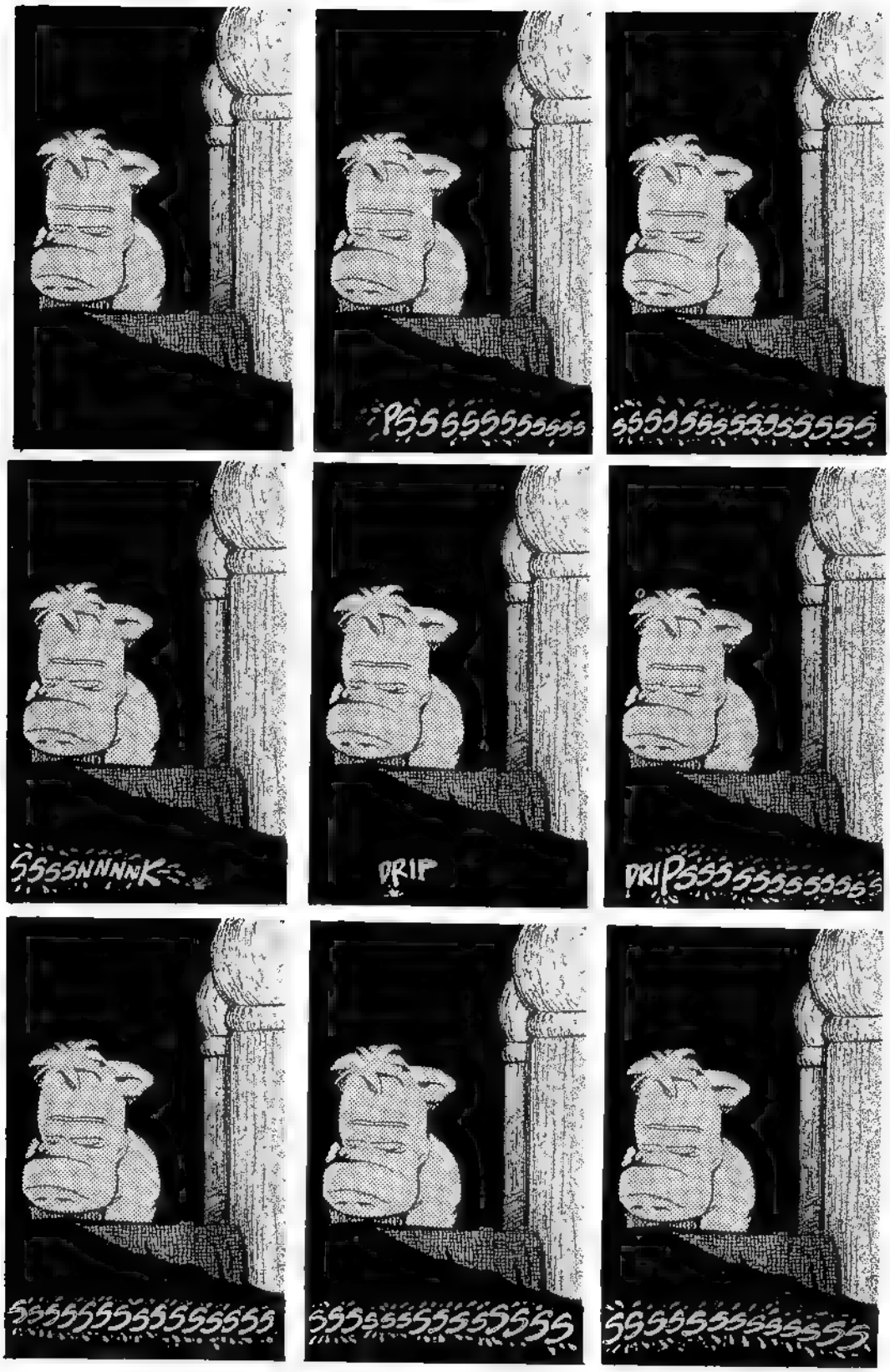
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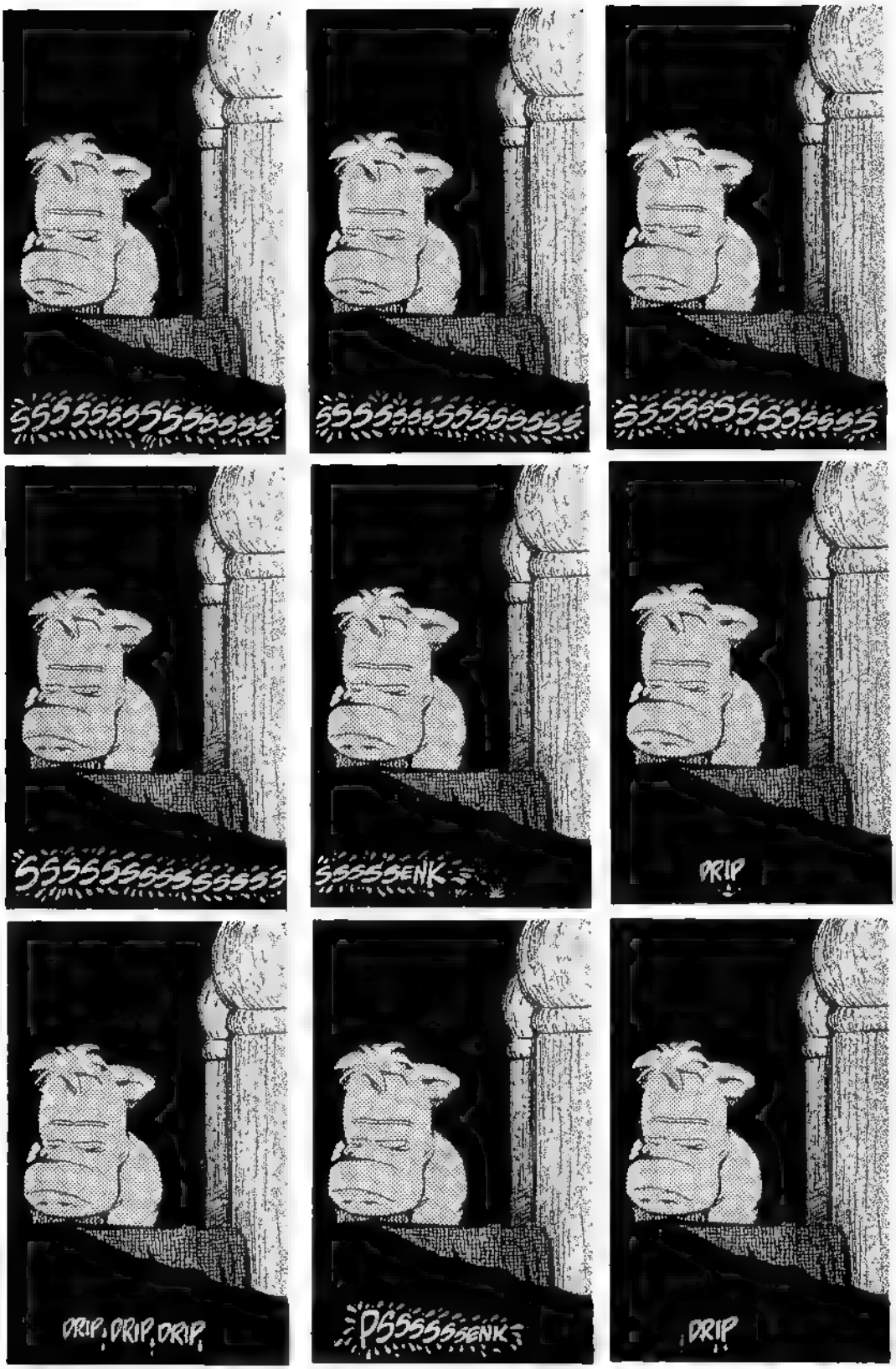
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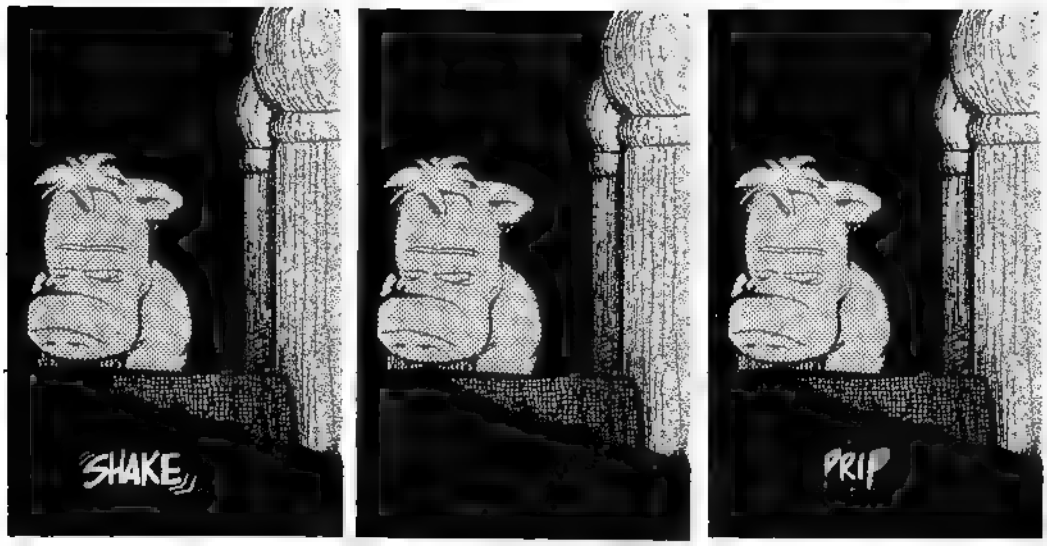
SHAKE
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NEXT: DREAMING ON an EMPTY BLADDER

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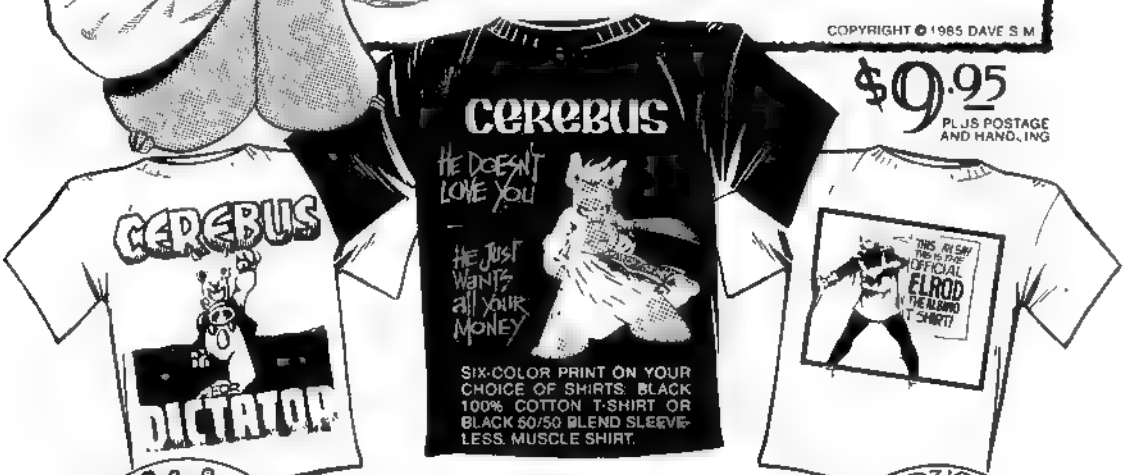
CEREBUS
HE DOESN'T LOVE YOU
HE JUST WANTS all YOUR MONEY
SIX-COLOR PRINT ON YOUR CHOICE OF SHIRTS. BLACK 100% COTTON T-SHIRT OR BLACK 50/50 BLEND SLEEVELESS MUSCLE SHIRT.
CEREBUS
DICTATOR
THIS IS MY OFFICIAL ELROD THE WIZARD T SHIRT!

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THE F RST TWO IN WHAT WILL EVENTUALLY BE A SET OF FOUR DIFFERENT PINS DEPICTING **CEREBUS** IN HIS **BARBARIAN** AND **CANDIDATE** STAGES. ARE NOW AVAILABLE. BOTH PINS FEATURE A FOUR-COLOR DESIGN WITH GOLD FINISH AND ARE APPROXIMATELY 1⅛ INCHES IN SIZE WITH CLUTCH-BACK ATTACHMENT FIXTURE ON BACK.

THE COMPLETE SET OF **CEREBUS** PINS WILL ALSO BE MADE AVAILABLE AS A SPECIAL, LIMITED CASED SET OF 100 BEFORE CHRISTMAS 1985. MORE INFORMATION ON THE LIMITED SET AND THE REMAINING TWO PINS WILL BE MADE AVAILABLE SOON.

#1

$5.95
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#2

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AARDVARK COMMENT

P.O. BOX 1674, STATION 'C', KITCHENER, ONTARIO N2G 4R2

Note from the President (cont'd)

I'm starting on Cerebus Jam #2 next week Honest I am Gerhard's gone sailing so I'll have time I had a funny thought though We already have advance orders for 30,000 What if Colleen Doran, Dick Giordano Mike Grell and Barry Windsor-Smith and I did, like, stick figures, y'know? A stick figure Dave saying "Hi boys and girls here's my pal Colleen Doran" And a stick figure Colleen Doran saying "Hi! It's great to be here in Cerebus Jam" Wouldn't that be wild? And we'd sell five thousand more of them than we do the monthly book The distributors and shop owners would be pissed off because they wouldn't sell and they'd only order, like, two hundred of #3 And I'd make it really good, with a... a... Frazetta cover and Al Williamson and Neal Adams and Alex Toth and Gil Kane (Gil Kane has agreed to do one, by the way) And there would only be, like two hundred of them, eh? And I'd have five hundred of my own, all in mint, in a safety deposit box

Do you ever get the feeling I'm the sort of person who should be on a short leash?

Dear Dave,

As president of Strawberry Jam Comics I would like to thank you for plugging **To Be Announced**. It was muchly appreciated.

When TBA #1 comes out, you'll have to write us and tell us what you think of it. If the letter's good enough, we may even print it. If it's really good we may even start a fan club for you And if it's really, really good, we may even let you do a backup story or something.

Stawberry Jam Forever,

Paul Stockton, president
2350 Dundas Street W., Apt. 2102
Toronto, Ontario
M6P 4B1

I've got a great idea for a story telling people how to write a fan letter to Mike Bannon. The only problem is it will have to be reproduced in full-process colour or the sight-gag with the flamingos is going to fall flat on its pin-feathers. Let me know.

****

Pres. Dave ol'boy,

I was sorry you didn't do President Powers. I think he would have been as much fun as Pope Cerebus.

Did you know that a lot of us couldn't decide for the longest time what Power's sex might be?

Lately I can't make head or tail of some your episode titles

So much for the Fawning adulation. I'm writing because of Chris Farrel's letter in #75. CF says 'color! better paper!' and all I can think of is how hideous The New Mutants looks nowadays.

I say it's spinach and I say the hell with it No, that's not it...

I say, black and white is simply wonderful; colors would destroy that great texture work. And I don't much care about the paper.

By the way, Cerebus is the only comic my wife reads.

D.A. Sherwood
3107 School Street,
Oakland, CA , 94602

Actually one of the biggest reasons I have for doing Cerebus is to give wives and girl friends of comic fans at least one comic book they can read.

****

Hello Dave,

Yes, it's the dry season again, and in addition to burning out my cooling fan to beat the heat, my programmer and I must go through our annual period of aardvark withdrawal.

However, Terry had to go the city on business last week, and so we were able to get caught up with the latest Sim/Gerhard masterpieces

Now, issue #75 deserves more than the usual flippant comments about anti-matter aardvarks or Mike Banon's nose hairs I don't know how many of your readers will realize that this issue marks the one quarter point of your three hundred issue story. Or even how many will appreciate the quiet magnitude of the change that you have wrought within its pages.

Here, **for the first time in his life,** Cerebus has put someone else's well being and personal wants ahead of his own. (His actions in issue #6 can be disregarded, since he was then operating under the influence of illicit substances.) As the Pope he could easily have annulled Jaka's marriage and forced her to accompany him. But instead he let her go, and even tried to ease the financial burden she and her new family faced.

This is a major departure from his "normal" greedy, selfcentred lifestyle. I doubt that Cerebus is even aware of what he has done, or that he will consider it to be an intelligent thing when he does realize. But his life will never be the same again.

Overcome in the prairies,

BOB
Box 177,
Morse, Saskatchewan
S0H 3C0

Overcoming Computers, Aardvark-Vanaheim leads the way.

****

Dearest Dave:

A woman crying to an aardvark! A woman in MY CLOTHES crying to an aardvark! And the aardvark crying BACK! OH WOW!

Hssssss,

Connie L.
3423 Race Street,
Philly, P.A., 19104

Connie, dear, you're going to have to calm down before you do yourself an injury.

By the way, guys, Connie left her phone number on the office answering machine. What am I bid?

****

Dear Mr. Sim,

The aardvark is cool. You have the word of a friend of mine who, without having read a single previous issue of Cerebus, picked up "Acquired Tastes" and laughed his ass off through the whole thing. Not quite the reaction I'd expected, which shows, if anything, how long it's been since I could chuckle at the inherent ridiculousness of an aardvark and a human woman comminuting each other in an ugly emotional scene. Never having heard the "Twist and Shout" album, I was at a loss to imagine some meaningful background music for this issue, but taking a cue from the film "The Plague Dogs" and most twentieth century American drama, with emotional tension like this, who needs the intrusion of background

music? The idea of printing a supplemental reading list for these long storylines is one you may have rejected as pretentious, but I, for one, would like to seek out some additional material illuminating the background and structure of **High Society** and **Church and State** (for the former, I've sought out Richard M. Nixon's **Six Crises** and Theodore H. White's **The Making of the President** series). Would you care to recommend a few specific books?

Sincerely,

C.E. Dinkins
USS HALEAKALA (AE-25)
FPO San Francisco CA., 96667-3004

For High Society Gore Vidal's 1876, Burr, Woodward and Bernstein's The Final Days. For Church and State Dostoyevsky's The Idiot Alec Bashevis Singer's The Penitent Will Eisner's A Contract With God Morley Callaghan's A Time For Judas. That'll do for starters anyway.

****

Dear Dave:

I've read a lot of letters complaining that "Aardvark - Comment" has become too concerned with "open-forum" type letters, and too little concerned with actual comments. Hmmm. Maybe, maybe not. You pick the letters to be printed, so obviously you're not too worried that no one will think you're good unless "Joe Smith of Anytown" writes a letter saying so. You're good. You know that, and we know that, so why belabor the point with narcissistic fan mail? Anybody who wants to know what a great magazine Cerebus is should read the damn magazine. The "forum" is much more entertaining than "Me like Cerebus" letters anyhow. By all means, Dave, go with the flow.

As for Cerebus itself, I must say I find it very therapeutic. It helps me chuckle away unwanted pounds and inches (read: I laugh my ass off) while keeping my brain sharp. The plotline flows, even from issue to issue, and those who say they can't follow it aren't paying attention. I am constantly fascinated by the interplay of characters and situations, so much so that I can almost say that I buy each issue just to see what happens next. But no, the humor hooked me and the humor keeps me. Your style has improved considerably since Cerebus #1, and if the trend continues (and I sincerely hope it does), Cerebus #300 will probably be the last thing I ever read: I'll die laughing, Dave. (By the way, could we have a cover blurb like #75 in a 300-Issue Limited Series? I'm a little sick of having my intelligence insulted by the publishers holding my hand while I pick up the latest comics).

Ah well, Cerebus, by all rights, should still be a popular comic well into the years when my kids start reading comics. It's too innovative to grow stale. Cerebus is the only comic that I can name that tells a tale of serious satire successfully (or is that successful satire seriously?). About the time Marvel was bringing us "monster-of-the-month" in Conan, Cerebus was bringing us Wolverroach. You tell me which is more original. It is fresh storytelling such as this that sets Cerebus apart from the comics that sit on the shelves from first issue to last. I've read a few of those. No contest.

Hmmm. I do seem to remember saying something about the relative entertainment value of "Me like Cerebus" letters a couple of paragraphs ago. Oh, well. Don't print it, if it comes down to a question of condoning hypocrisy. I just wanted to put in my two cents. Give my regards to Gerhard, and I hope I get a chance to bend your ear in person someday.

You have a damn nice day,

J.D. Wiker
8606 Spring Valley Lane,
Indianapolis, IN., 46231

I hate to pass up an opportunity to condone hypocrisy. You have a damn nice day, too.

****

Hey Dave,

I know the answer to Connie's rhetorical question. Cerebus's tail is in the fridge with the pickles. Hah, fooled you! You thought I was going to say that his tail was in the oven.

Tom Tesarek
11409 South Oakvak
Minnetonka, MN., 55343

If you had said that I never would have printed your letter.

****

Dear Dave,

#74 is my third consecutive issue of Cerebus and tho I can't say I understand much of what's going on, its still pretty enjoyable... and I'm actually looking forward to the next issue. I didn't even know that was a picture of Connie Lingus in #72... not that I care all that much since cheesecake doesn't do anything for me. (Some beefcakes of you don't sound like such a bad idea, tho... maybe you can dress up as Dave the Barbarian).

The letter column was at least as interesting as the rest of the book... no mean feat (unless the book sucks) but it does seem a bit cliquey.

I'm hanging in there!

Fred Averick
1730 E 18th Street,
Brooklyn, NY., 11229

Connie, Mike, BOB, Rob 'n' Derek, and I strongly object to your calling our letters page cliquey. It's so typical of you outsiders.

****

Dear Dave,

Issue 74. Gak. Oop. Barf. Gag. Eek. Hmm... well... ah... the vest, yes the vest and... ah... the... the sword. That too. Almost forgotten what they'd looked like. Jaka, too... um... so Dave, you enjoy giving people cardiacs, hmm? If you keep this storyline up, your readership is going to decrease by about half. Its very nice of you to leave us hanging for one and one-twentieth issues about the identity of Jaka's... husband. Now where did I put those saccharin tablets...?

Jaka still looks fine after what seems like a couple thousand issues, although Cerebus really should try and see Dr. Spock about his wrist fetish. Cerebus Jam was very OK, although Cerebus 3-D is worth its weight in big round glowing white strange things around these parts.

HAH! YES! JUST when you thought this might be an alright letter what would rear its ugly head but a... a COMPLAINT!

"Church and State", Dave?

Howzabout "Cerebus gets to be Pope and finds he doesn't like it" or maybe, "Dave can't think of a good title so he will look up the biggest cliché in the book and nail our tear ducts".

Ouch.

I just bit my tongue.

Dave, yer a menace.

Kind of sincerely,

John Goodman
Lost in America

I am, aren't I?

Jaka's husband's name is Richard and he's a professional gambler. Neat, eh?

****

Dear Dave,

After hearing so much about Cerebus, I finally broke down and read #74. Pretty good. As a matter of fact, I enjoyed it more than any Marvel I've read in a while. Then I read #75. Even better. Then I bought

#75. And the Jam. The Jam was great too. I can't wait for #2 (a Barry Windsor-Smith cover? Excellent).

Now here's my problem. You see, when I decide to collect a series, I want the **whole** series. I'm just about finished with Nexus and I've finally gotten all the Alan Moore Swamp Thing's, so I asked myself, "What do I collect now?" I'm never going to forgive you. Why do you have to put out such a damn good comic that's so goddamned expensive to get? I have to pay for college for the rest of my mortal life. How am I supposed to scrape up $1,000 (wait for a few years; it'll get there) for Cerebus #1? Answer me that.

Y'know, now I remember why I've avoided Cerebus for so long; I knew that I could never afford the **whole** series. I know that the Swords reprints are available, but it'll take that series forever to get up the point I started. Besides, it's just not the same as having the original issues. You can understand that, can't you?

Seriously, lately I have been doing my personal best to promote independent titles to my friends who won't read anything but Marvel. I've gotten so sick of Marvel mediocrity. And I'm sick of the fans who close their minds to the far superior independent (and even many of DC's recent titles) because "it's not Marvel". I guess I should just pity the poor fools and take satisfaction in knowing that at least I'm not missing out on the best. As always, the price of independent titles is the major turn-off for many. Any chance of you guys being able to take advantage of the new "gang-printing" to cut costs?

At any rate, Cerebus is now on my list of regulars, and high on my list of titles to push on people who are ignoring them. I'll let you know if I "convert" anyone.

And before I go, since we're on the subject of good books that are largely ignored, can someone tell me about Love & Rockets? I'm curious as to what I might be missing.

Sincerely yours,

Chris Burnham
27865 Drape Road,
Lawton, MI., 49065

(A) I don't think you should be so hard on "Marvelites"... most of us have our "Marvel phase" in our early teens when the whole interlocking "Marvel Universe" is bright and shining and hypnotizing.

(B) A lot of Cerebus' mystique stems from the scarcity and Overstreet value of back issues as well as the high cover price. Sort of like Playboy which has always cost more than any other magazine on the stands. You get what you pay for.

(C) Why not buy a few issues of Love and Rockets? It's definitely one of the top five books at the moment. (As an aside, I talked to Jaime Hernandez in Dallas and he's agreed to do a Cerebus Jam story. Aside from that aside, Wendy Pini has also agreed to do a Jam story. Aside cubed, Bob Burden and I will be doing a Flaming Carrot cross-over in Cerebus Jam).

****

Dave:

I'd promised myself that I'd wait until #100 and hit you my 50-page Master's thesis, but #75 has forced my hand.

It wasn't the story... even though I haven't felt this sorry for the obnoxious grey twerp since #36; it wasn't the art... even though you and Gerhard have got that Pinteresque staging down to a science; it wasn't even the letter column (sanity prevails... hallelujah)...

It was the note from the president.

After I read your "ironic" story about Neal Adams, I smiled for about ten minutes. Funny stuff, I thought.

Then I **really** thought about it.

Depression set in. Okay, I see the moral of the story: "When it comes to personal goals and personal ethics, make sure the latter guides the former." But jeez, Dave! What's next? Harvey Pekar is a Republican? Carl Barks was taking graft from Warner Brothers? Mario, Jaime, and Gilbert Hernandez are really a leisure suit conglomerate from Encino?

This kind of thing does not exactly engender trust...

Perturbed,

Jacob Lasky
264 Bay 20th Street,
Brooklyn, NY., 11214

What makes you think that comic book artists are supposed to engender trust?

****

Dear Gerhard,

It took me awhile to see that you were leading up to. In issue 70 you gave just a hint; tastefully reserved to pages six and seven. At the top of those pages you had the bricks dramatically highlighted in the barred light. At the bottom, those bricks in the floor were particularly solid and effective beneath the prostrated Cerebus. Overall, very well done. It seemed to carry great promise.

So imagine my dismay when I got a hold of issue 71 and found nothing but woodwork, windows and tiles. Tiles fr'chrissakes! There's nothing wrong with tiles mind you... as long as they are used in the proper context. And I must say that was a particularly expressive bit of oak paneling on page nine. BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MASONRY!!

Little did I know just how cagey you were.

As soon as I saw the cover of issue 72 I knew everything was going to be all right. There it was, masonry on the cover. I know a lover of fine masonry such as yourself, wouldn't let us down. Inside the build-up was obvious and by no means overdone. Obviously, something big was in the making.

I waited for issue 73 with my eagerness barely checked. And yes, it was everything I hoped for! A Jam-Packed All Masonry Issue!! My God, it was to spasm!!

Such versatility Gerhard! Masonry in shadows; masonry in daylight, masonry in walls, floors, archways and chimneys. Inside; outside... it was wonderful! And page 12... rarely have I seen stonework done much better. Such emotion, such pathos! Those four stones right around the little "pop" at the bottom of the page... one could almost imagine them having little rock lives of their own.

But could you keep this up? I knew it would be too much to hope for. In 74 I wasn't surprised to see you keep the brickwork to a minimum. The heavy use of furniture and tapestry was a definite artistic transition. Perhaps you could even have dared to throw in a tile or two. I can only hope that what you do next will be executed as masterfully!

Perhaps some suggestions for future issues... maybe a few persian rugs on the walls and floors, or the occasional stained glass window. How about some moose skin rugs? Be bold. Innovate! Don't be clichéd like your competition. Remember, you only go around once in life, so you're gotta grab all the gusto you can! Let's see some really heavy backgrounds!

Masonically,

David Geitgey
19211 Welby Way,
Resada, CA., 91335

PS: Tell Dave that that short, grey, fuzzy guy is all right, but he did block off a particulary strong stone in issue 73, page 11.

Ger's answer: "That's just plain silly." (Now you know why he doesn't write the book).

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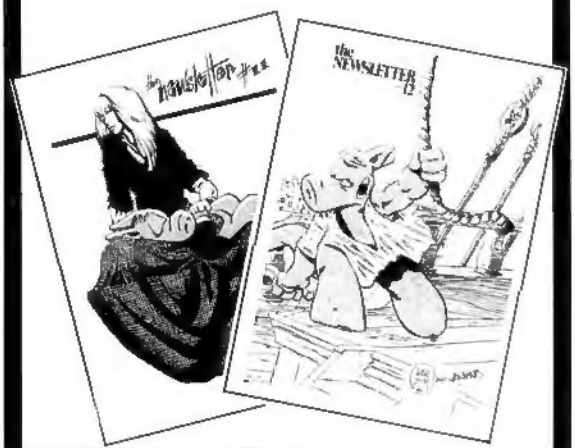

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